

TSEdiot's Crazy Short Film of Formatting Goodness(Name of Project)

by
TSEdiot (Name of First Writer)
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(Based on, If Any)

Revisions by
(Names of Subsequent Writers,
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Current Revisions by
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FADE IN:

EXT. STREET (LOCATION) - DAY (TIME OF DAY OR NIGHT)

Above is the master header. This is the action under the master header in which our hero CHRIS BATY (in capitals as he has been introduced for the first time and will have a speaking role) is walking down the street WHISTLING (in capitals because it is a sound that is important to the narrative) "Dixie" and looking very pleased with himself.

Suddenly, we create a new paragraph because something new has happened and the shot has changed. ERIN, a tall, gorgeous blond in her late 20s, jumps out from behind the bushes. She pulls a large samurai sword which glints in the morning sun and has a metallic STINGING sound.

ERIN

(this is a parenthetical used
to describe how an actor
says something, such as: in
a strained accent)

Your monkey-style novel writing is no
match for my tiger-crane style!

CHRIS BATY

(laughing)

You are no match for me! Let the battle
begin! My name is in capital letters
every time I speak, and my dialogue is
formatted in the center of the page!

Chris does a little kick to illustrate how action can interrupt dialogue with a paragraph, and Erin thinks to jump back into dialogue formatting.

ERIN (V.O.)

How can he not be afraid? At least he
cannot hear my voice over thoughts,
indicated by the v.o. If we could see
Chris and not me, it would be o.s. or
o.c. to indicate that I am saying it off
screen or off camera!

CHRIS BATY

Prepare to do battle, evil wench!

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. COFFEE SHOP - NIGHT

We have changed locations and should probably describe the drab, chain coffee house that tries to look cool and fails. Above the new master header, there is a transition, which can indicate a cut, a dissolve, or the fade in/fade out of the beginning and end of the script. It is not necessary to indicate every cut as that is almost always how the film progresses. Other fancy effects, such as split screening, iris-ing, wiping or cross-fading, can go in that spot as well.

Chris and Erin are locked in a battle of wits, concentrating on the chess game in front of them.

CHRIS BATY

Give me a moment, admirable foe! I must use the restroom!

Chris stands and bows valiantly.

INT. COFFEE SHOP, BATHROOM

This is not a new master header but a sub heading in the same location. It indicates that we are still in the coffee shop but now a different part. Chris washes his hands and looks at himself in the mirror. Suddenly, a VOICE startles him.

DEEP VOICE (O.S.)

I thought we might meet again, Chris Baty. I am not yet given a name even though I might be important to the narrative as the audience does not yet know who I am, so your screenplay should not give me away yet either. I will just laugh sinisterly... ha ha ha!

(pause)

I just paused in the parenthetical, indicating about three seconds of pause. Other pauses like ellipses... or dashes- show short pauses. Or longer still...

Chris continues to look out of frame at the voice.

DEEP VOICE (O.S.)

Yes, Chris Baty, I can take an even longer pause when we add some action to it! The dialogue also has a continued! Because I have not yet finished speaking!

(MORE)

DEEP VOICE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
If I continue to talk over onto the next
page, a MORE goes in the character space
and the dialogue is continued again.

Chris runs his hands through his voluminous jet black
hair.

DEEP VOICE
You never thought you'd see me again!

CHRIS BATY
Cybele!

INT. COFFEE SHOP, CHRIS AND ERIN'S TABLE

Erin, to whom we have now designated a specific location
in the coffee shop master header but do not need to
reiterate the time of day for, TAPS a chess piece while
she waits for Chris. She sips her tea when a loud CRASH
can be heard from the back of the coffee shop.

Chris and CYBELE, a fit, muscular woman in her 20s, run
toward the table and duel with a pair of fountain pens.

CYBELE
You will now face the wrath of Mont
Blanc!

CHRIS BATY
My Waterman will beat your Mont Blanc any
day!

Erin leaps into action, uncapping her white Bic pen.

ERIN
I have waited four centuries to exact
revenge on you, Cybele. Notice how the
number four appears in my dialogue but it
has been written out fully! Yes, it is
important to write these things out,
because one page of a screenplay makes
one minute of screentime, so the words
must be written as they are said - unless
the abbreviation is what is said.
Cybele, prepare to B.Y.O.B.!

CYBELE
(yelling)
With pleasure!

CHRIS BATY
My word count will reign supreme!

LEGEND OVER IMAGE (with BELL sound as it appears): This is how to write a montage! And this is how to put text superimposed over what we see on screen!

INTERTITLE (with cheesy piano music): "This creates an intertitle, which is an individual card of text with no image. We now return you to the montage!"

EPIC BATTLE MONTAGE

-cheesy MUSIC begins, and 70s kung-fu sequence begins with Cybele knocking over Erin's DRINK

-Chris and Cybele STAB but miss and hit the TABLE

-Erin SHRIEKS

-Cybele CRASHES through the WINDOW

-here SOUND EFFECTS and the most important OBJECT and/or ACTION are capitalized

-Chris and Erin CHASE after Cybele, who is almost down the street

-Cybele rounds a CORNER and STOPS, catching her breath

-Chris and Erin LOOK around but do not see her on the BUSY STREET

-though we have changed locations, we do not need to create new master headers; the purpose of the montage is to compress time and space

-We end on a GLINT of Cybele's PEN as she walks away. It is important to show the ending of a montage, indicated by both the "We end on..." and the END MONTAGE

END MONTAGE

We are now back inside the coffee shop because we have not yet finished with the action under this master header.

Chris and Erin talk to people, who all shake their heads. This could have been in the montage as there is no dialogue in a montage, but because we're ending where we started, it is good to come back to the scene. Especially if there will be dialogue.

CHRIS BATY

Wow-za!

EXT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

Chris and Erin are exhausted and do not know what else to do to show formatting.

Erin's phone RINGS with the theme from "Bridge on the River Kwai." She takes it out of her pocket - it is pink with little stars - and she answers.

ERIN

Hello?

INT. CYBELE'S EVIL LAIR - DAY

We see a large office chair and Cybele's arm drumming on her black desk. She smokes a cigar.

CYBELE

I have eluded you again, super punks.

ERIN (O.S.)

I am still speaking on the phone though we are still under the evil lair master header. What do you want?

EXT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

Chris and Erin lean over Erin's phone.

CYBELE (O.S.)

I want your ScriptFrenzy delivered to me by the end of the day. Got it?

CHRIS BATY

(to Erin)

A day? Doesn't she know it takes a whole month for that kind of work? See how I indicated that I was speaking to Erin instead of into the phone? Now I will talk to Cybele.

(into phone)

Go back to the forums!

INTERCUT - TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

This means that we can go back and forth in the conversation to the different master headers without writing it every single time. A voice-over will still indicate if we are in the other header.

CYBELE

Yes, it will be most excellent, your
fifty thousand words.

Cybele blows a smoke ring.

ERIN

It can't be done! Give us a month!

CYBELE

Fine, whiners! Deliver them to me at the
WriMos temple by midnight at the end of
the month! There will be someone waiting
for them.

Cybele hangs up the phone with a flourish.

END INTERCUT (you can also write BACK TO SCENE)

ERIN

What are we going to do? We'll never
have it done in time.

CHRIS BATY

Ah, but this isn't like NaNo. It's
ScriptFrenzy - our script only has to be
20,000 words! We can totally do this!

SCRIPT WRITING MONTAGE

-Chris and Erin TYPING furiously

-Chris WIPING his brow

-Erin looking determined with a PENCIL in her mouth

-Word count box reads 10,000

-Erin SLEEPS on the floor with her SWORD as Chris TYPES

-Erin TYPES while Chris does JUMPING JACKS

-Word count box reads 20,000

-Chris and Erin HIGH FIVE

-Chris and Erin watch the PRINTER print their script

-They jump in Erin's bright red PORSCHE and speed off

-We end on SCRIPT PAGES FLUTTERING in the car. Because we
are moving on to a new master header, it is not necessary
to write END MONTAGE.

EXT. WRIMO'S TEMPLE - NIGHT

A very large, ornate temple stands before Chris and Erin who stand in awe. A tiny OLD MAN appears and COUGHS, and Chris and Erin look next door at a small but reasonably attractive travel agency, whose sign has been crossed out and replaced with "OFFICE OF LETTERS AND LIGHT."

ERIN

(awkwardly)

Are you the one whose picking up of our script by midnight... was foretold to us?

OLD MAN

I am not. I am Russ. I am but a humble servant of the WriMos servers. The being you seek dwells inside.

Chris and Erin exchange glances and follow Russ inside.

INT. OFFICE OF LETTERS AND LIGHT - NIGHT

The office is covered in golden letters and at the end is a bright green door. They are greeted by TAVIA, a woman in peach robes who looks mysteriously like Molly Shannon.

TAVIA

(softly)

Greetings. I am Tavia. You have learned all there is to know about formatting that seven crazy pages can teach you. Let us deliver your script to the one. You should never italicize or bold dialogue, but if something needs emphasis, it should be underlined.

Russ and Tavia carry the script in tandem to the door.

ERIN

(whispering to Chris)

Hey, didn't this used to be your office?

INT. OFFICE OF LETTERS AND LIGHT, INNER SANCTUM

We see Chris and Erin in the door frame. A tear runs down Erin's cheek and Chris lets out a small, high pitched SQUEAL. We move to see what they do - a woman perched on a golden seat with light emanating from her. She is KRISTINA, a wise-looking bombshell who looks exceedingly young but we can instantly tell she is not.

KRISTINA

(wisely)

Come to me, fair children. I am
Kristina.

CHRIS BATY

Oh, Kristina, we beseech-

KRISTINA

(interrupting)

Words are not necessary now for you have
finished.

The four of them kneel before Kristina, when Erin notices
Cybele to Kristina's right.

ERIN

Cybele! But I /thought you...

CYBELE

(interrupts at /)

Sometimes a deception is necessary, but
you see, I have reformed my ways. I now
serve Kristina and I write plays!

RUSS

Kristina is about to give her greatest
advice.

TAVIA

We knew that you would want to be here.

ERIN

Thank you all.

They all look up at Kristina reverently.

KRISTINA

My novelling children. The greatest
thing I can tell you all is this. A
script is a blue print for a movie - your
writing should show your reader that
movie. Cameras can see and hear, and
that is what you write for.

OTHERS

(chanting)

See and hear.

KRISTINA

You must write how your movie is seen and
heard. The screenplay must place your
reader in front of the screen.

OTHERS
(chanting)
In front of the screen.

KRISTINA
Let your reader see your movie.

OTHERS
(chanting)
See my movie.

KRISTINA
Go forth, and write well.

FADE TO BLACK.